



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1406 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-5506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2005

Contact: Stephanie Lundberg
Phone: 202-225-5506

Kind Fights for Small Family Farms with Amendment to Preserve Commodity Payment Cap in Federal Budget

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) offered an amendment in the House Budget Committee which met late on Wednesday evening to lower the commodity payment cap limitation from the current cap of \$360,000 down to \$250,000. In offering the amendment, Kind asserted the measure is needed because the existing cap of \$360,000 is routinely skirted via loopholes within the rules governing farm payments; permitting some of the largest farms, agribusinesses, and corporations to haul in hundreds of thousands, even millions of taxpayers' dollars, year after year. While the Budget amendment failed on a voice-vote, Congressman Kind vowed to pursue enactment of a sensible commodity payment cap by authoring legislation that mirrors the Grassley-Dorgan bill in the Senate.

In speaking to his fellow Budget Committee members, Kind stated, "A firm \$250,000 payment limitation will limit the production of huge crop surpluses that drive down prices and help corporate farms get even bigger by providing the resources needed to buy up their neighbors. This distorted payment system is a double whammy to the vast majority of our nation's farmers, most of whom receive little or no subsidies at all."

During reauthorization of the 2002 Farm Bill, Rep. Kind led a bipartisan effort to restructure agriculture policy by lowering the cap for commodity payments and placing greater emphasis on voluntary conservation payments. This new policy would not only provide a more equitable distribution of federal assistance payments to our nation's struggling farmers, but would reconcile U.S. agriculture policy with World Trade Organization trade policy, thereby strengthening multilateral trade relations.

During consideration of the 2002 Farm Bill, Kind's efforts resulted in a majority of the members of the House of Representatives (265 to 158, Roll Call #100) to instruct Agriculture conferees to enact real payment cap limitations in an effort to reduce the federal budget deficit and inject market forces into the farm economy. Congressman Kind believes the overwhelming, bipartisan support for this motion clearly demonstrates that a vast majority of the members of the House support President Bush's common-sense, FY06 budget proposal to cap subsidy payments at \$250,000 a year for each individual farmer.

(more)

“In light of our current budget realities, and the already gross inequity of the current agriculture subsidy system, how can we support millions in government assistance to a very few rich farmers in a select few States? I will continue my efforts to pass a payment cap that would affect a small fraction of mega-farms in a select few states to ensure Congress is spending our limited federal resources in ways that reach more farmers.”